4: Cross L-5 (no date) 1948 E16 Slavs E16

the landlord. In this way, under the early Romanovs, between 1630 and 1650, freedom of agricultural labor was abolished in Russia, and this situation prevailed until 1861.

The Muscovite system suffered a severe blow in 1598 when Theodore, Ivan the Terrible's son, died intestate and the old dynasty tracing its descent from Rurik became extinct. Since the realm and its inhabitants were regarded as the absolute property of the sovereign, the disappearance of the ruling family was a major catastrophe. Any tsar, however legitimately elected by the general assembly convoked by the patriarch of Moscow, was bound to be weakened by his dynastic illegitimacy. Hence with the reign of Boris Godunov began a period of violent revolution which lasted until 1613, largely motivated by the effort of the nobles to free themselves from exactions and restrictions which tradition forced them to endure from a scion of the old line, but which they would not suffer from anyone else.

When Michael, the first of the Romanovs, was finally elected to the throne in 1613, political self-consciousness had developed to the point where there was some realization that the sovereign actually depended on the people *and* not the reverse. On the other hand, this realization was strongest among the great nobles, the landowners, and the high officials, and they set up the new dynasty at the price of privileges not otherwise obtainable. It is also notable that the rudiments of parliamentary government, typified by a popular assembly, likewise existed in the early years of Michael's reign, but failed to mature because the level of popular political intelligence was not high enough to appreciate that elective representatives of the people had a real weapon in their potential control of finances. Hence there was no protest when the governing class allowed it to lapse. The government became intensely centralized, and with the establishment of serfdom the nobility and the gentry inevitably became a permanent ruling class upon which the crown was dependent. Since townsmen were forbidden to move into the country, and peasants could no longer establish them-

6: Mousset H-4 (no date) 1950 E16 Slavic Peoples E16

Club) and the *Skupshtina*. But only secondary questions were dealt with, to be re-examined—without any more practical result—in the following month in Prague. These questions included the creation of a Slavonic Bank, a Slavonic Telegraphic Agency, the preparation of an Exhibition, the extension of Sokolism. . . . The time of heroic debates had passed.

Then, in the speculations founded on an identical destiny for the Slavonic community, there was one disturbing element—Poland. Towards that country, Tsarist Russia displayed implacable aversion. Had she pursued a really Slavonic policy, she would have tried to utilise the powerful factor formed by the persecuted Poles beyond her own frontiers. A Slavonic policy would have succeeded in making of Russian Poland, governed with tolerance and understanding, a centre of attraction, if not for Little Poland (where the Viennese policy of Austro-Polonism gave the illusion of some measure of individuality), at least for the savagely persecuted Poles in East Prussia, in Posnania, and in Upper Silesia.

For their part the Poles were inclined to think that there existed only two Slavonic peoples, Russia and themselves, and, of the principles of Slavism, to grasp only that directed against Germany.

It was precisely in the measure in which she appealed to the Slavonic idea that Russia caused them uneasiness. As for the other Slavonic peoples, their relations with them were only occasional. *Bohemi Polonorum infestissimi inimici* ran an old saying. The seventy-seven Polish deputies who made up the *Kolo Polsko*, and together stood for all the parties represented in the Reichsrat, rarely cast their votes with those of the Slav bloc formed by the Czech, Slovene, Serbo-Croat parties of Istria and Dalmatia. Yet the Slavonic Union of 1907 proved—though for a very short time—that, with them, the Slavs would have secured an absolute majority in the Parliament of Vienna. The *Kolo Polsko* adopted a realistic and short-sighted policy; its members derived temporary advantages, but consolidated a régime which the other Slavs declared to be inhuman and condemned by the evolution of the modern world. The Poles saw the Serbs only as Orthodox Christians and vassals of the Russians. They boycotted the last Slav Congresses, in order not to sit at the same table as the Russians. In 1911, the Serbs succeeded in

6: Mousset H-4 (no date) 1950 E16 Slavic Peoples E16

on the basis of respect for the principle of nationalities'. No reference to a federal system.

He returned to Czechoslovakia early in March, 1945, and, from Kosice, he followed the last stages of the liberation. On May 10 the national flag again floated from Prague Castle and Cathedral; a few days later Benes made a triumphal entry into the city.

The Government (formed on April 5, under the presidency of M. Fierlinger, and composed of twenty-five members, seven of whom were Communists) avoided the mistake made by the majority of the liberated countries, by postponing the elections until passions had had time to subside a little. The authorised political parties, four in number, agreed on the allocation of mandates to the Provisional National Assembly, which numbered 300 deputies, including 100 for Slovakia. On April 14[1] an electoral body chosen by the local National Committees nominated the members of this Assembly. 'The Czechs', Benes said, 'must take radical measures, while at the same time avoiding extremism'. That was the whole programme of the Czechoslovak Popular Front.

In the international order, the Government observed the same prudence. Benes's realistic attitude towards Soviet Russia is well known. 'The Czechs are a Slavonic people, and they are specially drawn towards the Russians, whom they understand better than any other people'. But Czech culture, and the democratic education of the Czech people, are fundamentally Western. The President continually returned to that assumption. Czechoslovakia is an intermediary region between two civilisations; its historical evolution, its psychology, its intellectual and social structure, all have affinities with the Anglo-American and French democracies.

The Soviet orientation was represented by the Communists, under the leadership of the Deputy Prime Minister, M. Clement Gottwald, and the Minister of National Education, Zdenek Nejedly, a celebrated musicographer, who attended the Moscow Panslav Congresses. But their influence was exerted moderately, and solely on the lines of the national interest. In reality, the Czech people, with their habits of thrift, their appreciation of property, their aversion to conformity, are fundamentally opposed to the Marxist ideology.

1 [1945 -- Analyst]